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There are a lot of things many of us take for granted in our everyday lives. The ability to walk into a phone booth and make a call...or drive ourselves to the grocery store...or read about services we need.

This issue is about people who cannot take everyday living for granted. Because of physical or mental handicaps or limitations caused by old age, they have to struggle to make their way in the world, often against barriers the rest of us unwittingly impose.

Built into USDA's food assistance programs are provisions to make services accessible to the elderly and handicapped. In the articles that follow, we take a look at these provisions. We also look at how communities are using food programs to enhance opportunities for elderly and handicapped people to lead full, independent, and productive lives.



FOR FOOD STAMP USERS WITH SPECIAL

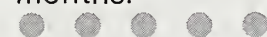
Some basics on how to apply for and use food stamps

Of all the assistance available through the Food and Nutrition Service, food stamps are the most important tool for reaching low-income elderly and handicapped people in need of food help. USDA estimates that nearly 25 percent of all food stamp households have at least one person who is elderly. Some 10.3 percent of all food stamp participants are age 60 or older, and many of them are disabled.

The Food Stamp Program has several special provisions to help the elderly and disabled apply for and receive food stamps. Among them are these:



Certification up to 1 year. Households with elderly or disabled members may be certified for the Food Stamp Program for 1 year. The average period of certification is 3 months.



Joint processing. Currently, elderly and disabled people may apply for food stamps at local social security offices at the time they apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. However, joint processing is limited to persons who live in households in which all members are receiving or applying for SSI.



Mail certification and issuance services. Elderly and disabled people who have difficulty getting around can ask the food stamp office to arrange a home or telephone interview. The certifying office can then issue stamps by mail.



Use of authorized representatives. Elderly and disabled people may name an authorized representative who can handle the complete food stamp application process for them. This includes applying for stamps, going for the interview, picking up the stamps, and shopping for food.



Medical deductions. If a household has at least one person who (a) is age 60 or older, or (b) receives SSI benefits or disability payments under the Social Security Act, the household may deduct all medical expenses that exceed \$35 a month for its elderly or disabled members. Deductions are made from the household's adjusted income.



Shelter deductions. Households with elderly or disabled persons may deduct all shelter costs over 50 percent of the household's adjusted income.



Higher allowable assets. Food stamp rules allow households of two or more persons, one of whom is 60 years old or older, to have up to \$3,000 in assets. All other households are currently allowed \$1,500.



Dependent care deduction for working adults. Food stamp households may deduct up to \$115 dollars per month for the care of an elderly or disabled person when such care enables someone in the household to accept or continue employment, or to participate in training or education preparatory to employment.

The Food Stamp Program also has the following provisions to help elderly and disabled people use food stamps to purchase meals:



Communal dining facilities and home delivery of meals. USDA may authorize nonprofit food services to accept food stamps from the elderly and disabled in payment for meals. Such food services may include communal dining facilities and services that deliver meals to homes.

Currently, about 1,500 home delivery services, such as Meals on Wheels, and 2,600 communal dining facilities are accepting food stamps.



Restaurant meals at low or reduced prices. States may contract with restaurants to offer meals at low or reduced prices to food stamp participants who are age 60 or older. When approved by USDA, such restaurants may accept food stamps for meals. Currently, 10 states use this option to contract with about 660 restaurants. The states are: Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, Indiana, Arkansas, Arizona, Hawaii, Iowa, and South Dakota.

In addition to these special provisions, there are other accommodations for the elderly and disabled that are best identified and made locally. For example, while the Food and Nutrition Service cannot authorize drug stores to accept food stamps, arrangements have been made between some pharmacies and grocery stores so that the latter can sell food supplements (such as for cancer patients) for food stamps.

For more information on the Food Stamp Program and special provisions for the elderly and disabled, write:

Food Stamp Program
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

by Michael McAteer

A look at one county's efforts to reach the blind



Lil Gyulveszy has been blind since childhood. For 3 years she has worked at the Cleveland Sight Center for the Blind, teaching and counseling visually impaired people who have personal problems or who want to participate in the center's rehabilitation program.

In 1977, she called the Cuyahoga County food stamp hotline. "I need to know more about the food stamp program so I can inform my clients about its availability," she said. "Could you send someone to my office so we can talk?"

That call prompted a meeting between staff members of the Cleveland Society for the Blind and the Cuyahoga County food stamp staff. After examining the hotline log and finding numerous calls from visually impaired people, the two agencies embarked on a joint venture to produce a food stamp brochure in braille. Their efforts have not only helped Cuyahoga County residents, but have served as a model for other social service agencies preparing materials for the blind.

● ● ● ● ● Helps clients and caseworkers

Food stamp information in braille is helpful both to visually impaired people themselves and to people who work with them.

As a caseworker and home rehabilitation teacher, Gyulveszy divides her work schedule between interviews at the center and working with clients in the community. "I go to the visually impaired person's home to teach braille and daily living skills," she says. "If the family I'm counseling is having financial problems, I tell them that food stamps can help supplement their food budget, and I encourage them to contact the food stamp office nearest their home.

"With this food stamp pamphlet in braille, I can direct them to the correct food stamp application center located in their part of town," she says. "Sometimes the people have



Visually impaired herself, Lil Gyulveszy works as a caseworker and home rehabilitation teacher. Many of her clients are food stamp participants.

heard of the food stamp program but do not understand how it works and where to apply. This brochure helps me help them." Gyulveszy says she feels more independent, professional and effective on the job by having the food stamp information on her desk.

"Once the immediate concerns are met—the personal and financial problems—it's easier for me to teach people techniques of caring for their homes and families. Teaching them crafts helps them learn the methods of touch and this makes them function more independently at home. They can turn on the oven, for example, and move to a new setting when they want to. All

the areas of learning meld together," she says.

Not all of Gyulveszy's clients know how to read braille. In fact, those who do not outnumber those who do. Gyulveszy has learned that people who lose their sight late in life—possibly because of a serious illness or accident—will probably never learn braille. "They depend a lot on their family, friends or volunteers to help them out," she says. In these instances, she explains the food stamp program to family members and leaves printed materials for them to use as reference.

Those clients who do read braille use the food stamp materials on their own. "The deaf and blind whose only means of communication is braille, or persons who lost their sight during childhood, appreciate the freedom of reading the information themselves," Gyulveszy explains.

This is the case with Lucy Miller, the first person to receive food stamp information in braille in Cuyahoga County. Because of an accident, Miller has been visually impaired since childhood. She was declared totally blind 10 years ago.

Miller has been using food stamps since 1964. She heard about the brochure in braille at a meeting held in the high-rise apartment where she lives. After the meeting she contacted the food stamp staff and requested a copy. "Now I can read about the program and the income guidelines in my own home," she says. "This way I know that I am receiving the correct amount of stamps each month."



Adds feeling of security

Handicapped persons like Lucy Miller must rely on volunteers and neighbors to tell them what they re-



Lucy Miller, pictured here in her apartment, was the first person to use food stamp material in braille in Cuyahoga County.

ceive in the mail and to read it to them. Information transcribed in braille helps them be more independent and feel more secure. "And," says Miller, "the list of issuance center locations lets me tell the volunteers exactly where to cash my ATP card."

The authorization-to-participate card (ATP) is a check-like card that lists the amount of stamps the food stamp participant is allotted for a month. It is mailed to the participant each month. An issuance center may be a bank, currency exchange, or even the office at which the participant initially applied for food stamps.

In addition to using the food stamp brochure to help herself, Lucy Miller also uses it to help other people in need of food assistance. When neighbors from her high-rise apartment come to visit, she reads the food stamp brochure to them if she thinks they may be able to benefit from the program.

The Cleveland Sight Center is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee this year. In addition to Cuyahoga County, the center serves Lake and Geauga Counties and parts of Summit and Medina Counties. The center receives 10 percent of its income from the United Way Agency and the remaining portion is provided through private and public support. Persons who are visually impaired may benefit from the center's services regardless of race or creed, age, education, financial ability or economic status. To receive certain services—like being issued a white cane or getting specially processed bus and railroad passes—the individual must by law meet the requirements of legal blindness (less than 10 percent vision).

The center's rehabilitation program covers a span from 8 to 24 weeks, depending on the needs of the client. Out-of-towners who enroll in the rehabilitation or food

service training program stay at the sight center's new apartment facilities. Through the food training program, blind persons learn to manage snack bars and other food service operations.

The agency's services are available to every visually handicapped person. Individuals are encouraged to pay service fees in accordance with United Way agencies' policy. Fees are scheduled on a sliding scale, based upon ability to pay, but no person is denied services because of inability to pay. Many of the rehabilitation services needed by blind persons have no fee attached.



Staff does transcribing

The Cleveland Sight Center used its own facilities and staff to transcribe the food stamp materials into braille. According to Cleo B. Dolan, executive director of the Cleveland Society for the Blind, similar materials could be produced just about anywhere in the country with sight centers and local food stamp offices working together.

"Most sight centers have all the equipment to work with," he explains. "Once a copy is transcribed, it can be reproduced very fast by a thermoform machine. And there is no cost for postage. Most of the States throughout the country have a permit that allows reading matter for the blind to be mailed free of charge."

The Cuyahoga county food stamp staff provides the information to be transcribed. There are now two brochures in braille: "How to Apply for and Use Food Stamps," a USDA pamphlet, and "Cuyahoga County

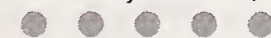
Helps with Food Stamps," a brochure compiled and published by the Cuyahoga County Welfare Department.

"The USDA brochure gives the reader general program information and the local brochure tells how, when and where to apply for the program in this area," says Verna Moore of the Cuyahoga County food stamp staff. "The local brochure also lists the locations and hours of issuance centers."

To let the public know about the materials in braille, the food stamp staff sent notices to community agencies, state agencies, and the news media. They mention the materials in speeches and during meetings with community groups.

Moore agrees with Dolan that free postage helped defray the cost of the project. "In fact," she says, "the only real cost to the agency was the paper."

Was it worth it? There's no doubt, says Lil Gyulveszy, who knows from her own handicap the problems of visually impaired people. "People who are blind enjoy trying to think and do things for themselves. The food stamp brochure in braille is one way we help them do this."



For more information on this project contact:

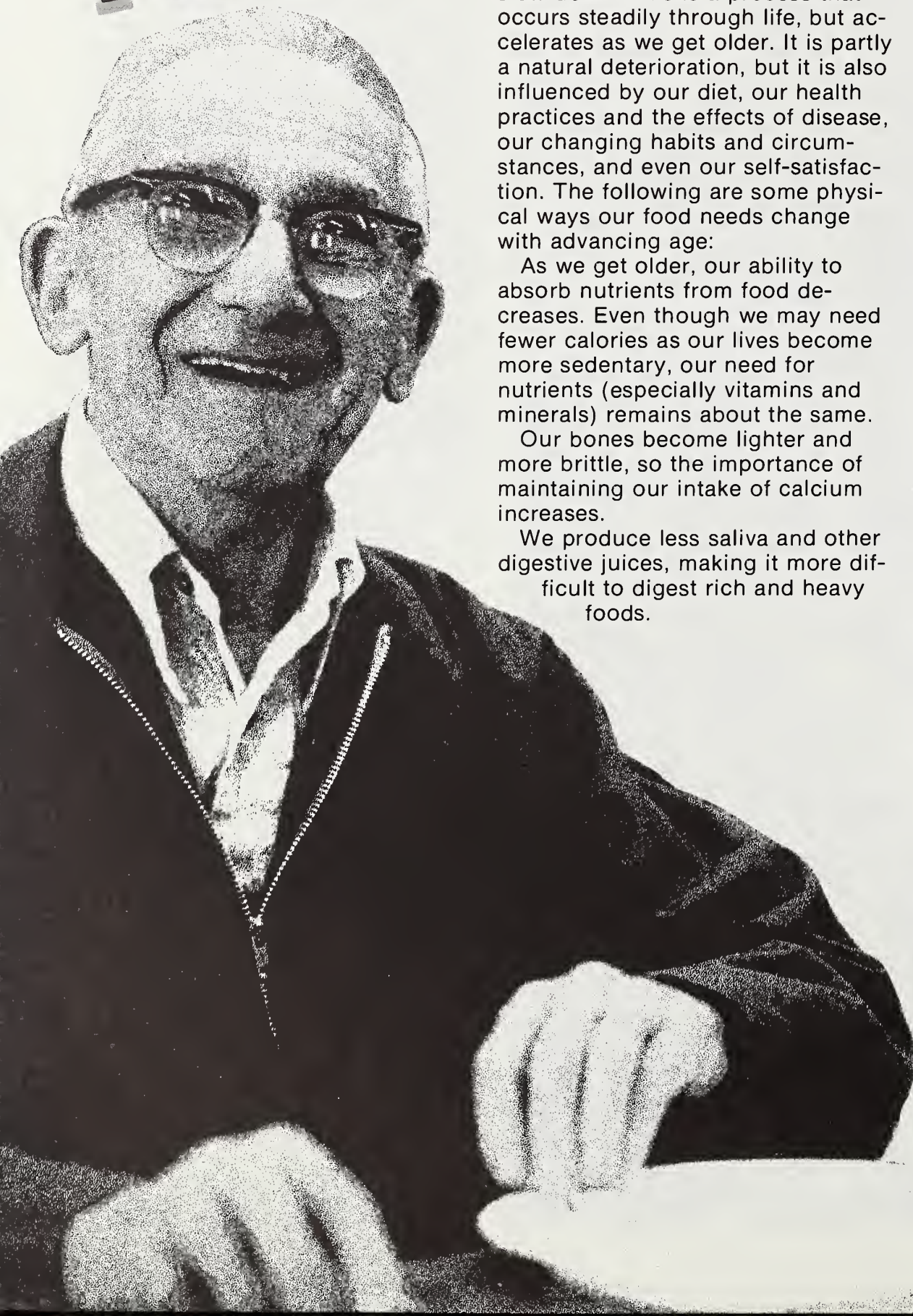
Lil Gyulveszy
Cleveland Society for the Blind
1909 E. 101st Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

or

Verna Moore
Food Stamp Program
Cuyahoga County Welfare
Department
3121 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

by Eunice Bowman

MEALS & COMPANIONSHIP FOR THE ELDERLY



As our age advances, our bodies slow down. This is a process that occurs steadily through life, but accelerates as we get older. It is partly a natural deterioration, but it is also influenced by our diet, our health practices and the effects of disease, our changing habits and circumstances, and even our self-satisfaction. The following are some physical ways our food needs change with advancing age:

As we get older, our ability to absorb nutrients from food decreases. Even though we may need fewer calories as our lives become more sedentary, our need for nutrients (especially vitamins and minerals) remains about the same.

Our bones become lighter and more brittle, so the importance of maintaining our intake of calcium increases.

We produce less saliva and other digestive juices, making it more difficult to digest rich and heavy foods.

More frequent, smaller meals become easier to handle than three large ones.

We need extra bulk—more foods that are high in fiber, such as whole grains and leafy vegetables.

Loss of teeth and increasing incidence of gum disease may make it hard to eat certain foods.

Our body becomes less able to meet extreme demands, and it becomes more important to eat good meals every day.

Many factors affect our ability to get food, prepare it, and eat it. The elderly face myriad problems they are often ill-prepared for. Loss of a spouse may make fixing food difficult, and eating it uninteresting. Loss of mobility may mean fewer trips to the grocery store or increased dependence on others, both of which may result in not always having what one needs. Coping with inflation on a fixed income is an added burden.

Adjusting to retirement can be emotionally difficult, resulting in depression and loss of appetite. Feelings of helplessness and dependency, inability to improve one's surroundings or move to better ones, and health problems can all overshadow the need to eat well.

Help is available

The best deterrent is to be aware that nutrition is a constant need and that good nutrition can reduce other problems or at least make us better able to cope with them. Good food is an important morale builder.

Social service agencies are good sources for information on programs to help the elderly and the handicapped eat well. Meals on Wheels, transportation assistance, companion programs, feeding programs at social centers or schools, and other resources are often there for the asking.

The Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) cooperate to help

make some of these programs possible. USDA supplies donated foods, or cash in lieu of foods, to nonprofit meal services for the elderly funded by HHS under the authority of the Older Americans Act. Last year, USDA contributions to HHS nutrition programs for the elderly amounted to \$57 million in cash and \$14 million in foods.

Other nonprofit meal services for the elderly, not funded by HHS under the Older Americans Act, are not eligible to receive cash from USDA. As charitable institutions, however, they are eligible to receive some USDA foods. The amount of food depends on the number of needy people they serve.

The Department of Agriculture authorizes nonprofit meal services, on application, to accept food stamps as payment for meals served to elderly or disabled participants. In December 1980, there were 2,638 nonprofit communal dining services and 1,472 nonprofit meal delivery services accepting food stamps throughout the country. In New York City alone, there were 95 communal sites and 20 delivery services accepting stamps.

Meals with companions

Meal delivery services and communal dining centers usually offer much more than good food at little or no cost. They are hubs about which resolve whole systems of support such as health care, recreation, and simple companionship. They become a welcome daily trip or visit from a friend who can be depended on to help with a small problem or a large emergency.

Self Help for the Elderly, a San Francisco organization, is a good example. It not only offers meals, companionship, and activities, it also trains older workers to enter the job market. Its unique meal program serves and delivers three ethnic meals a day—Chinese, Korean, and Filipino—as well as an “American” one.

Most of the meals are served at nine communal sites—in basements, schools, churches, whatever space Self Help can lease cheaply



or have rent-free—in the city's ethnic communities. Self Help serves about 580 meals a day and reaches an estimated 4,000 senior citizens a year. The schedules of the sites vary. Some operate on weekdays only, some on weekends only, and others all week long.

“The senior citizens in Chinatown

Self Help for the Elderly serves and delivers three ethnic meals a day — Chinese, Korean, and Filipino — as well as an “American” meal.

自老安



are very happy to have this place," says Robert Lin, one of the volunteers at the organization's Chinatown site and headquarters. "We have a lot of activities—moving pictures, slide shows, stories, games, music, art. People come every day at lunchtime. Some come in at 8 a.m. in the morning and stand in the doorway, waiting for us to open."

Lin, who is now 69, came to this country when he was very young. He worked hard all his life and

Many of the meals Self Help delivers go to elderly people living in residential hotels (right). Above is "Self Help for the Elderly" in Chinese.



raised several children, one of whom is now the Surgeon General at the San Francisco General Hospital. Noreen Chen, director of the meal program, describes Lin as a "typical" success story of the immigrant who works hard and achieves something in America. "He's a very giving person," says Chen. Lin is one of about 10 regular volunteers at the various sites.

Reaching the housebound

The Self Help staff deliver only about 10 percent of their meals, and most of those go to people who are or were participating in the communal meals program.

"In San Francisco, there are residential hotels that are occupied mostly by seniors," says Chen. "There's one room, with a bathroom and kitchen down the hall. Many of the Chinese and Filipino seniors who come to our meal sites live in these hotels, and when they get sick or become too frail and can't cook anymore or come down the stairs and go shopping, we do home delivery and home visits.

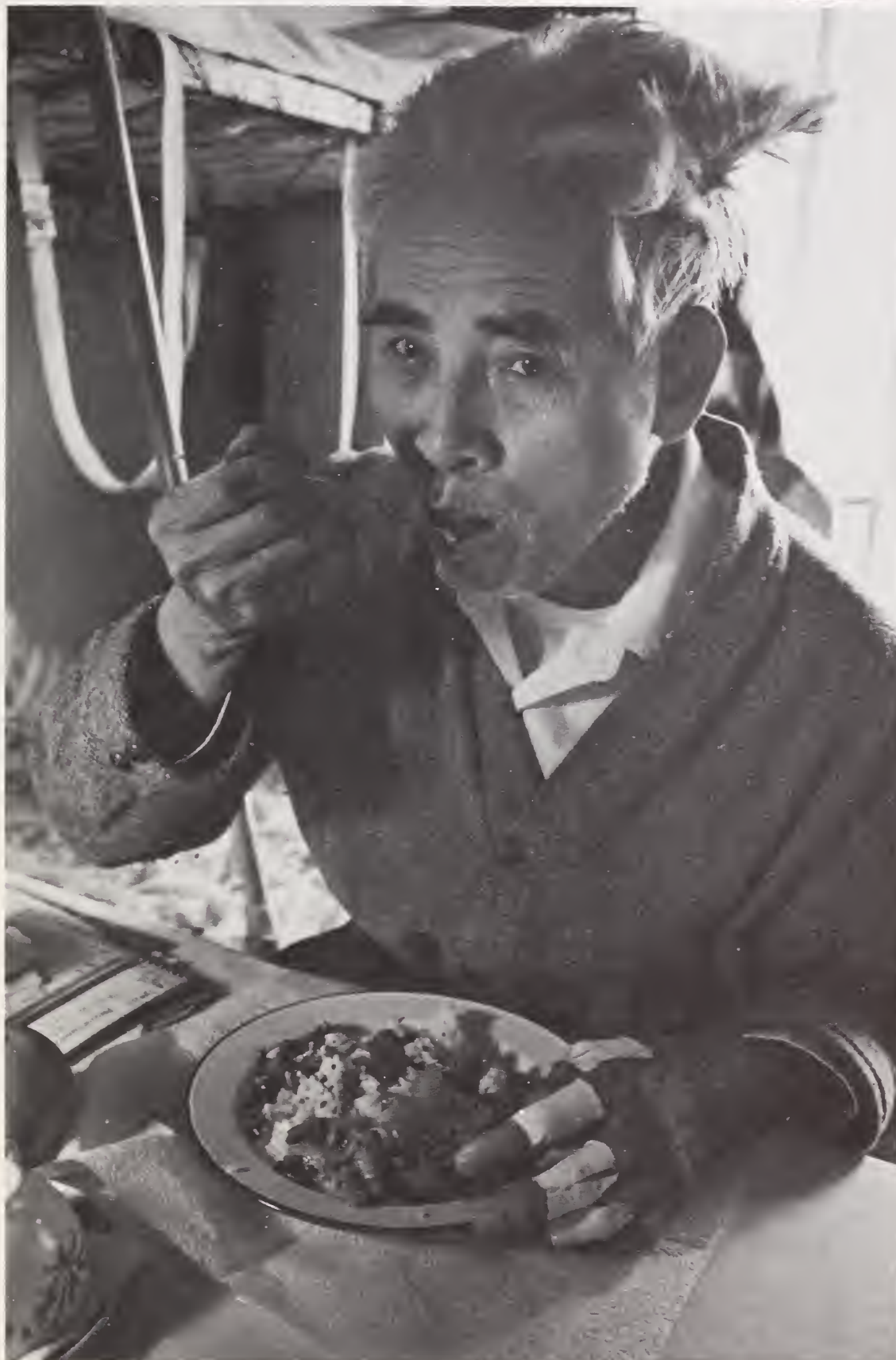
"For us, home delivery is more than just bringing the meals. The person who does the delivery visits the recipient and tries to solve whatever problem he or she has that day. For instance, in the Manila Town Senior Center we have a young Filipino man who's very committed to serving the elderly. He makes the rounds every day. After he delivers the meal, he comes back and maybe takes them to see a doctor, or writes a letter for them, or just visits with them. And for the Chinatown sites, we have a young Chinese man who does the same thing."

All the meals are prepared by caterers, using different ones for the weekend meals. The differences between the menus may be subtle to an "American" palate, but they make the meals more appealing to the recipients. Having appealing meals is especially important for older people, who, for one reason or another, may not always feel like eating.

The Chinese, Korean, and Filipino meals all have rice in common. The Korean ones may contain more sesame oil and usually include kimchi (pickled cabbage, of which there are many varieties).

The Filipino menu is described as having more of an "island" flavor, closer to Samoan, Guamanian, or Hawaiian food (more fish, stews,

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and taro, for instance). Most of the 580 meals are Chinese and "American." The Korean and Filipino ones together number about 100 a day.

Another interesting meal delivery service is operated by the Greater Detroit section of the National Council of Jewish Women. It serves two kosher meals a day—a cold lunch and a hot dinner—to about 130 recipients. "It's a unique program," says corresponding secretary Doris Goldman. "These people are used to eating kosher food all their lives, and would not be comfortable eating if the food wasn't kosher." Some recipients are on additional special diets, such as diabetic and salt-free.

The service is not restricted to the financially needy, although caseworkers from the Jewish Family Service do the "intake" on each recipient. Those who can afford to, pay a full fee.

Often, communal meal services operate only during the week, or on certain days. A four-county program in Florida arranged to buy individually bagged meals from its weekday caterer to distribute two each to its 600 participants for over the weekend. The meals consist of canned main courses, fresh fruit, packets of dried milk, and containers of juice.

In another Florida project, vocational students learning commercial cooking prepare some of the meals each week. This duty is rotated among several schools to spread the practice and keep it from becoming routine. The students gain valuable real-world experience and feel good about their contribution, and the recipients benefit from the students' enthusiasm.

For more information, write:

Darrel Gray, Director
Food Distribution Program
Food and Nutrition Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Self Help for the Elderly
640 Pine
San Francisco, California 94108

Susan Miller
Greater Detroit Section
National Council of Jewish Women
16400 West Twelve Mile Road
Southfield, Michigan 48076

by Christopher Kocsis

A visit to a training center for the mentally retarded

During the past decade, the mentally retarded—long shrouded in the darkness of fear, ignorance and superstition—have been emerging from the shadow of their isolation.

Increasingly, they are being helped to become functioning members of society through a wide range of therapeutic services. And for those who are too severely affected to function independently, skilled residential care is available—care which does not forsake their growth and their future.

Medical research into the cause and treatment of retardation has been significantly responsible for reversing negative attitudes. Society, guilty in the past of viewing retarded people as objects of shame and even ridicule, is replacing intolerance and misconception with compassion and understanding.

In Fairfax, Virginia, there's an institution that excels in treating and caring for the retarded. And the people who run the institution are committed to returning the retarded to the everyday world.

The institution is the Northern Virginia Training Center for the Mentally Retarded. Within several modern buildings resembling a small college campus, the center serves as a residence, school, work-site and medical facility for nearly 300 retarded children and adults.

As a residential child care institution, the center qualifies for USDA-donated foods provided by the Food and Nutrition Service through the Food Distribution Program. The Northern Virginia Training Center participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.



Full range of services

The center offers a full range of services: physicians on staff; speech, occupational, physical and recreational therapy; radiology; complete dental and medical services; and rehabilitation counseling.

For most children, the center provides primarily an educational program. They attend school either on or off the grounds 180 days of the year, just as other children do. In the summer, they attend summer school for 30 days. On their return from school in the afternoon, they participate in a clinical program of

psychological and recreational therapy.

Adults are given the opportunity of going into the community to work environments and sheltered workshops. Some of the less capable adults remain on the grounds in the center's own workshops. When they finish with work, the adults also participate in a program of clinical services.

No matter what the skill level of the adult, the work experience affords a level of independence and personal accomplishment. And for many, the experience is preparatory to being discharged and on their own.

It's not easy to obtain admission to the center. The prospective applicant must undergo many

FOOD AND TRAINING EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES

A visit to a training center for the mentally retarded

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It's not easy to obtain admission to the center. The prospective applicant must undergo many

screenings and evaluations, plus a review of his or her case by court, before being accepted. "We make it very tough to get in here because it's so hard to get back out," says Leon Rose, assistant director at the center.

Rose emphasizes that the goal is to treat a person's problem and then release him as quickly as possible. "we just don't take someone in," he says. "We take him in with a contract.

"We go to the family and say, 'These are the things we think he needs. This is what we can do.' And when we've done these things, we discharge him. No one is going to drop him on our doorstep and then go away and forget him."



Reaching these treatment objectives is rarely as easy as it sounds. "These contract objectives may take 5 years or they may take 10," Rose explains. "Sometimes, in the course of treating someone with a serious behavior disorder, we may correct the initial problem but inadvertently create two others in the process."

Residents of the center range in age from babies 1 week old to adults as old as 60. School programs are designed for 2- to 22-year-olds, but there are special education programs for people of all ages.

Food plays key role

Diet and nutrition play an equally important role in treatment. The operation of the center is totally funded out of appropriations from Virginia state revenues, but much of the food used to feed the residents comes from USDA. In 1980, the center received \$13,000 in donated food, amounting to 26 cents per child per meal. The types of donated foods vary from time to time, however they generally include dairy products, cereals and grains, vegetables, fats and oils.

"We utilize approximately 90 percent of the items available," says Lee Hilton, the center's food service manager. According to Hilton, many USDA-donated foods require

no special preparation—fruit, flour and shortening, for example, can go directly into fruit pies and cobblers. With some other items, however, the center staff must take extra steps to meet the needs of residents.

"We have people with many different feeding difficulties," Rose explains, "so we have one basic therapeutic menu with about five variations. If the menu includes hamburgers, for example, people on a regular diet will get a hamburger that is chopped. People requiring a puree diet will get a hamburger that has gone through the blender. It doesn't much look like a hamburger anymore, but the nutrition is there and that's what counts."

Rose estimates that roughly 80 percent of his residents are on some sort of special diet. "Our people may be on either low calorie or high calorie diets, special kinds of mechanical diets, low sodium or no sodium," he says. "Because we've determined that a strong link exists between the chemical interaction of foods and mental disorders, we must pay close attention to this as well to food preparation."

"We simply have to view everybody as individuals and provide food service to them on an individual basis. Even though we have a cafeteria and most of our people go through the cafeteria line, everyone who comes through will be receiving, for the most part, an individual diet."

Providing residents with individualized food service means that each resident receives a meal labeled with his or her name. Staff members—as well as many Fairfax County teachers who accompany the children back and forth from



lunch—are on hand to help children select the proper food and feed themselves if they need assistance.

Some added features

The cafeteria itself provides a bright and airy atmosphere. Recently redecorated, it explodes in vivid colors of red, yellow, blue and green.

Another new addition is a salad bar, which the children love. The staff had been warned it would prove a failure, but not so, claim Rose and Hilton. "A salad bar gives the kids some freedom of choice—something they rarely enjoy," Rose says. "It also cuts down on plate waste. Since the kids make their own, they're more inclined to eat

everything they've taken. So we save money."

Some of the USDA-donated foods also are used in cooking workshops and demonstration projects the center has developed for adults. "We have a cooking program primarily for adults who are getting ready for discharge," says Rose. "Since we have several people who go out to work in the community, we teach them how to make their own lunches—how to make a sandwich and wrap it, put it in a bag with a piece of fruit, add their milk or juice and take it with them."

It requires a special kind of determination to commit one's self to the job of caring for the retarded, a career that can be richly rewarding, but equally frustrating and even heartbreaking. Both Leon Rose and Lee Hilton take an active interest in the activities, problems and feelings of the people in their charge. They care and it shows.

For more information on the Northern Virginia Training Center's food service or other activities, write:

Northern Virginia Training Center
for the Mentally Retarded
9901 Braddock Road
Fairfax, Virginia 22032

For more information on USDA-donated foods, write:

Darrel Gray, Director
Food Distribution Division
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

by Carolyn Williams

Schools make mealtime a time to learn new skills

There are many examples of schools providing handicapped students with better than normal access to food and nutrition services. Some schools have found imaginative ways to make mealtime an opportunity for children to learn and practice basic skills.

An impressive example is a school district in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, that consists of eight schools serving profoundly retarded or handicapped children with less than normal learning skills. The system educates approximately 1,300 children, between the ages of 1 and 21, from all the county's 33 school districts. A high percentage of the children have special mental disabilities, and about 200 have multiple physical disabilities as well.

Working on basic skills

All eight schools participate in the National School Lunch Program. "It's part of their basic training," says Bill Caldwell, director of business for the county board of mental retardation. "Some of the things we teach retarded children are basic life skills, and one of them is how to feed yourself, how to take care of your body."

In addition to housekeeping and food preparation skills, which some students learn in home economics classes, the children use the daily lunch period to work on the many skills ancillary to eating. The teachers eat with the children and assist them in learning to handle knives and forks, which is a precise and demanding motor skill. Cleaning up before and after meals must be learned, too.

The schools rotate a variety of serving styles to expose the children to different situations they are likely to encounter elsewhere: cafeteria style, buffet, barbeque, and especially family style.

Money skills are important; the children are taken out to eat often. Those who have learned to count



change pay for their meals, and the schools are considering a play-money scheme for all the meals. Although preparing each day's food is not a part of this system's training, there are occasional day trips into the kitchen to help and to learn how the meals are made. Actually, only two of the schools have complete kitchens, where the meals for all eight are prepared and later delivered by truck.

Vocational training

Some schools around the country use the cafeteria as a vocational training classroom for handicapped students, and in others disabled children take part in fixing the school lunch. One is Holland

School in Skowhegan, Maine. Holland receives cash and commodities through the National School Lunch Program, and all of its 28 students, who come to the school from several districts, make the noon meal.

The school is for trainable retarded children, ages 13 to 20. Holland has two different skill programs, one is woodworking, and the other in food preparation. In the latter, students study nutrition, buy groceries, and learn how to measure, mix, and cook. They make the entrees and salads, do the dishes, and clean up. They make bread and pies and, on each other's birthday, cakes which they decorate with frosting.

The point of the programs is to prepare the children for a more in-

Workshops give clients a sense of identity and purpose

dependent and productive life at home and possibly fit them for a job.

Some students do volunteer work when they leave Holland, and most go into two area workshops for the retarded. The Skowhegan workshop is a rag industry, which collects, sorts and prepares rags for local factories and shoe shops. It also helps the three local thrift shops with a pickup service. The Waterhill shop is for more advanced individuals and is crafts oriented; it refinishes furniture, braids rugs, polishes brass.

Ash Street School in Manchester, New Hampshire, is another where, for a time, retarded children fixed lunch and served it to their classmates every day. Although preparation has since been contracted out to a central commissary, students still serve the food, clean up, and help in the kitchen with special events. And the project's success has led to expanded programs for the trainable retarded in the Manchester school district.

As anyone who works with retarded or handicapped children realizes, it is only a small step from doing for oneself to doing for others, but that step goes a long way toward greater satisfaction and self-esteem.

For more information on these schools, write:

Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation
1050 Terminal Tower
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Ken-a-Set Association for the Retarded, Inc.
P.O. Box 334
Waterville, Maine 04901

Thomas A. Burke, Director
Food and Nutrition Services
City of Manchester School District
333 Beech Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03103

by Chris Kocsis



Imagine three sheltered workshops for the handicapped. Imagine a warehouse. In that warehouse, visualize 65,000 square feet of government publications—an area half again as large as a large supermarket—pallet after heavy pallet of books, brochures, posters, and other public information. You have begun to picture part of DCARC, a remarkable organization that handles the bulk distribution of many government publications, including this magazine.

DCARC stands for District of Columbia Association for Retarded Citizens, and is the local branch of a nationwide nonprofit corporation headquartered in Arlington, Texas. DCARC's workshops distribute publications for several Federal

agencies at a fraction of the likely cost. At the same time, the workshops provide gainful employment to several hundred handicapped clients at four locations.

DCARC clients include people who are mildly or moderately retarded, people who are emotionally disturbed or mentally restored, and people who have physical handicaps, such as sight and hearing impairments.

"A feeling of independence"

The workshop from which most Food and Nutrition Service publications are handled, is on the grounds



of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a Federal institution. While all of this workshop's clients are on the hospital rolls, 99 percent are outpatients. "That's one of the things we feel proudest about," said Shirley Wade, who was manager of this workshop for several years and is now deputy director of DCARC's workshop operations. "The wages our clients make through DCARC help make it possible for them to pay rent, buy food, and live in the community."

"It's unfortunate more people don't support sheltered workshops," she continued. "Many feel these people should go out and get regular jobs like everybody else, but if you talk to a couple you will see that it's hard as blazes for them to find work. And it's a funny thing,

most employers will accept inferior work from so-called normal people, but a handicapped person has to come very close to being perfect, because if you start out with a handicap, they will be looking for you to do it wrong.

"Actually, handicapped people will often do a job more carefully and consistently than others. They take to routines. And once they understand what it is they are supposed to do, they are not manipulative to the point of trying to get out of it, as some people are. They just work, and work, and work."

"I've had people who want to work through lunch, and break, on weekends, and on holidays. You have to say no. Working gives them a sense of identity, purpose. A person living within the confines of an institution, or in the care of a parent or guardian, knows he or she will be taken care of, so money itself is not a motivator. What they really need is a feeling of independence, and we help them have that by letting them manage their own affairs to the extent they can."

Clients receive their own checks, and DCARC encourages them to open bank accounts, establish check-cashing privileges at markets, and so forth. If a person is judged incapable of handling his or her own finances, that person is judged inappropriate for the St. Elizabeth's workshop.

Wade explained, "Parents and hospitals all too often say, 'I want to be the payee.' But we want people to feel they have the use of the money they worked for. I don't know how to say how important this is."

Variety of services

Clients and staff at DCARC maintain inventory records of all publications, and distribute them as

requests come in through the publishing agency. This guarantees that the agency itself knows what it has in stock. DCARC also keeps careful records that show when and how many copies of each publication are shipped, and how. It decides which carrier is the most economical and often can suggest better ways than those requested by the agencies. It has its own fleet of trucks for carrying the publications in town. The drivers' helpers are handicapped clients.

"We think the sheltered employment, training, and other experiences we provide are invaluable," Wade said. "A relationship is established not only with the client but with families and other support systems. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, hospitals, clinical people, and parents value the relationship because they can see how it benefits their wards. Our clients gain in self-esteem. And the government saves money. How can you beat that?"

For more information, write:

District of Columbia Association
for Retarded Citizens, Inc.
405 Riggs Road, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20011

by Christopher Kocsis

International Year Heightens Awareness



The General Assembly of the United Nations has declared 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), with this objective: to encourage the full integration of and participation in society of the estimated 450 million people on Earth who suffer from some form of physical or mental impairment.

In the United States, an inter-agency council is working to heighten public awareness of the rights, capabilities, achievements, and needs of disabled persons. For information on the council and how you can help, write or call Harold O'Flaherty, Executive Director, International Year of Disabled Persons, 330 C Street, S.W., Room 3124, Washington, D.C. 20201. Telephone: (202)-245-0170.

State and local efforts

Many states and communities have set up committees of their own to organize activities for the Year. In Milwaukee, for example, a county committee is starting a comprehensive program to make local merchants aware of disabilities. It stresses training personnel in attitudes toward disabled persons, making stores accessible, and educating store buyers about merchandise used by disabled consumers.

California has established a statement of rights for the Year. It is committed to:

Promote independent living

Insure equal employment opportunities

Develop a barrier-free environment

Guarantee access to public facilities and transportation

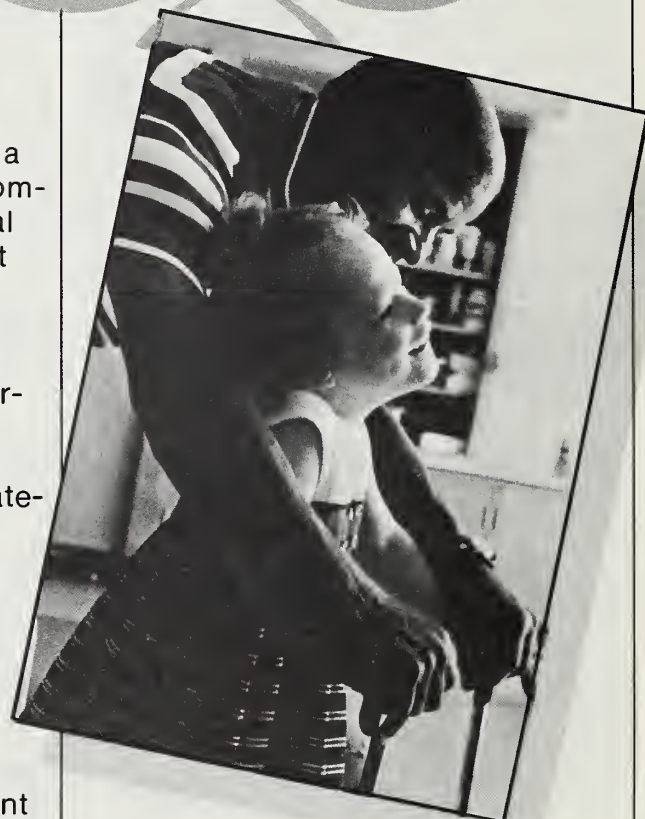
Provide the necessary supportive services for employment opportunity and independent living

End the segregated education of children with disabilities and insure a free and appropriate education

Secure the right of persons with disabilities to bear, raise, and adopt children

Guarantee the right of disabled persons to participate in all aspects of the political process

Promote affordable, integrated, and accessible housing.



Activities at USDA

For its own part, the Department of Agriculture plans to: continue to modify its buildings and facilities to make them more accessible to employees and the public; recruit handicapped personnel; establish talent and skill banks in each agency personnel office; and provide information to training officers, placement coordinators, and managers on the training needs of handicapped employees.

The Department is also considering: providing special equipment for handicapped patrons using the agricultural library; producing some of the Department's most popular publications in braille or cassette tape editions; and entering into a

contract with the Register of Interpreters for obtaining interpreting services on a regular basis. The Food and Nutrition Service has already offered its employees two beginning courses in sign language taught by a deaf employee and a trained interpreter. The agency will offer an intermediate course later in the year.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against the handicapped in employment or delivery of services by any activity receiving Federal funds. During the year, USDA will hold training conferences for employees on the provisions of this law.

Any person who feels he or she has been discriminated against because of handicap, age, or for any other reason by a Department of Agriculture agency, program, or recipient of USDA funds, should write to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

You can help...

What can you do to help the elderly and handicapped in your community? First, identify specific needs. Find out if there are organizations or social service agencies that can use your help. Existing volunteer and community action groups can pinpoint needs and offer some suggestions.

If you'd like to help with food and nutrition services, here are some examples of things you might do:

● ● ●
Volunteer to help feed handicapped children in local schools, or older people in congregate or delivered-meal programs.

● ● ●
Offer to help an elderly or handicapped person shop for food, cook, or apply for food assistance.

● ● ●
Investigate whether meal programs for the elderly provide meals on weekends, and work something out to fill any distressing gaps.

● ● ●
Try to cook creatively for the severely disabled—eating may be one of their few pleasures. They may enjoy having more variety in flavor and texture than they are now getting.

● ● ●
Meet with physical or occupational therapists to learn about the needs and capabilities of elderly and disabled persons, especially ones you



Photos courtesy of United Way and the President's Committee on Employment for the Handicapped.





know, so that you can tailor work or social situations to them better.

Do an accessibility survey of public places, including food stores and social service agencies. Publicize your findings and suggest ways the community might make services more accessible.

Boston has started a mini-store-on-wheels for the elderly. Although the original purpose was to protect the elderly from being mugged as they walked to and from stores, the mini-store-on-wheels has also made it easier to shop. Such a service could be expanded to serve rural shut-ins, whose transportation problems are the worst.

Coney Island, N.Y., is testing a different approach: senior citizens who live in the 60th Police Precinct are being given rides to and from shopping centers in police vans. The service runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 days a week.

Sponsor a health fair for the elderly with such features as blood and vision tests and nutrition counseling. Publicize existing and

needed health and nutrition services for the elderly and disabled. Involve the professional medical community and social agencies.

Look for help from local businesses and business leaders.

Stroke victims in Frederick, Maryland, wanted to form a club but found most members couldn't get to meetings. Stroke sufferers often recover slowly and are unable to drive or use public transportation. They requested the help of a local car dealer, who now furnishes a free pickup service and gets considerable public recognition for his gesture.

Sponsor a job fair to publicize local employment opportunities; obtain pledges from local merchants, industrial employers, and other businessmen to look into jobs for the elderly and physically and mentally disabled. Help them find out what jobs and tasks are suitable—and suggest ways they can create their own jobs.

When the owner of a Portland food store chain decided to close one of his stores, he offered it rent-free to a group of senior citizens interested in starting their own discount grocery. The Senior Grocery is now in its fourth year and going strong.

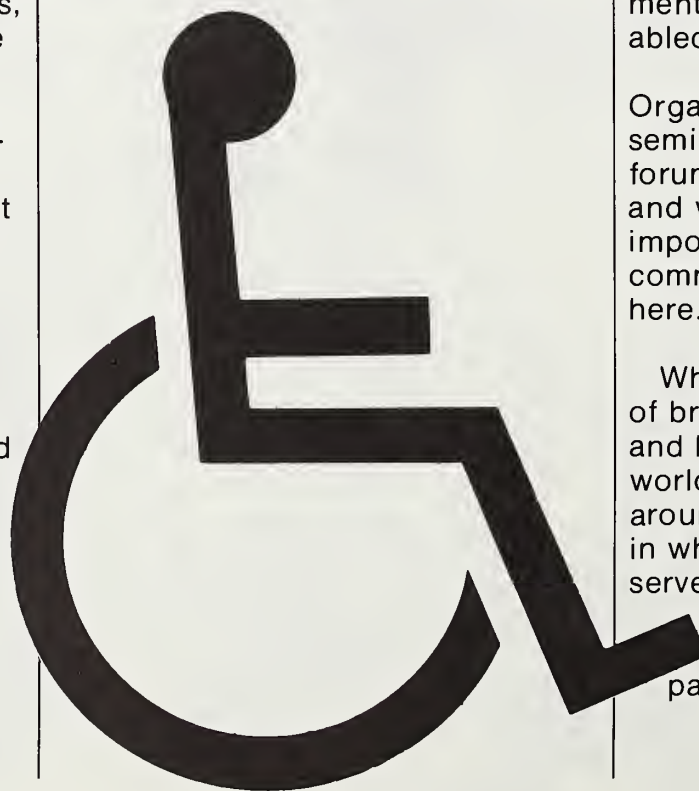
Work to reduce the incidence of disabilities through accident and disease prevention campaigns. Set up displays in shopping centers, recreational facilities, libraries, schools, churches, and in poverty areas.

Establish contact with other towns to learn about local, regional, and state services for elderly and disabled people.

Establish an award program to recognize community accomplishment in meeting the needs of disabled persons.

Organize dialogue—through seminars, interviews, public forums—involving persons with and without disabilities on issues of importance to them. The religious community can help with leadership here.

Whatever you do, think in terms of bringing the elderly, disabled, and handicapped to the “regular” world, rather than the other way around. While there are many ways in which these groups can be served only by bringing things to them, they often benefit more from being enabled to participate in society at large.



Making your project work

Several things are necessary to make your project work, whether it is a state, county, community, or individual one. Funds, space, workers and volunteers, and local support are all vital, and ingenuity can turn them up in unexpected places.

Sometimes different organizations can each chip in part of a service, as was planned in one Ohio county where sheriff's deputies were to drive a welfare department van bringing food stamps to the rural homebound. County officials decided to issue the stamps by mail, making the van unnecessary, but they felt the idea was good. In Seattle, a joint project between the city and the Seattle school district gives lunch to elderly persons in school cafeterias after the children have eaten.

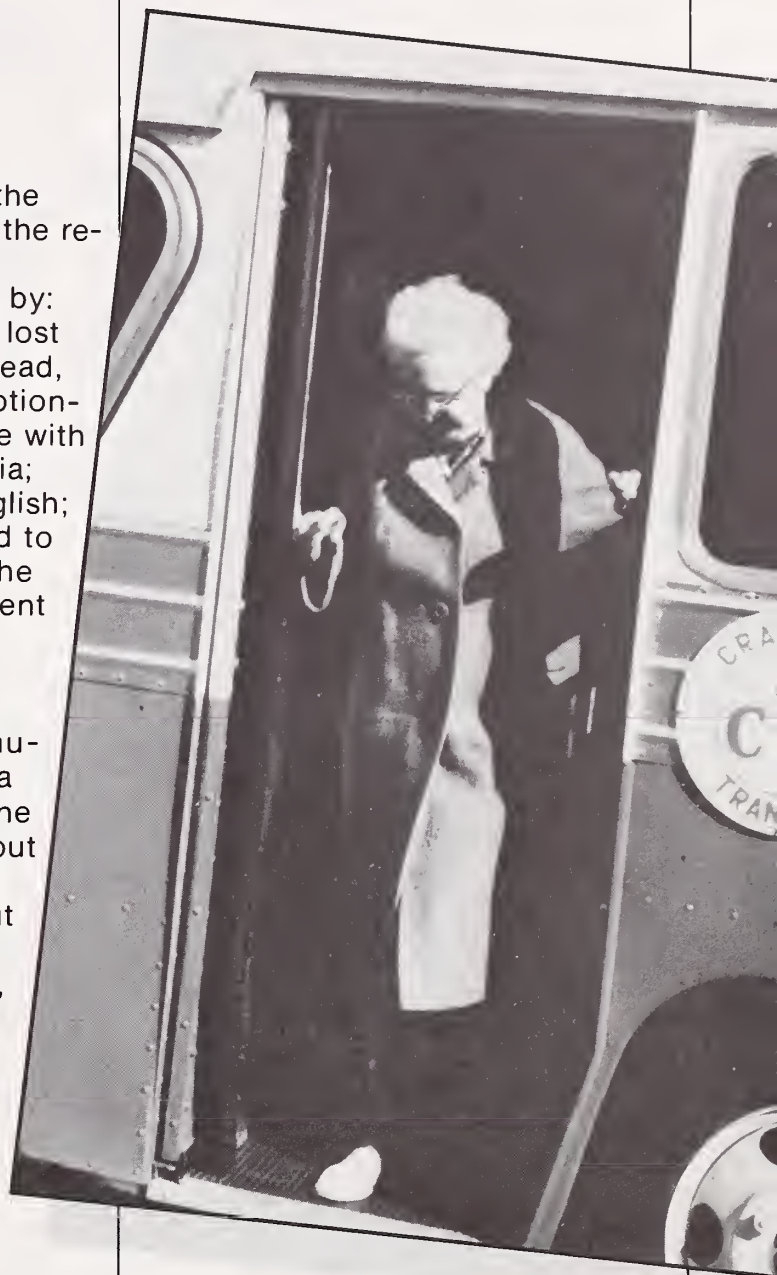
New resources are just as important as new services. The New Jersey Department of Human Services has published a picture cook-

book that was developed by the New Lisbon State School for the retarded.

The book can also be used by: people who have temporarily lost the ability to concentrate or read, such as stroke victims or emotionally disturbed persons; people with learning disabilities or dyslexia; people who do not speak English; and people who never learned to read. Copies are \$1.50 from the Office of Education, Department of Human Services, CN 700, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. Telephone 609-292-0501.

Whether you or your community begin a service, unearth a resource, or ask a question, the first step is not a step at all, but standing in somebody else's shoes. There, we may say, but for the grace of youth, job, opportunity, accomplishment, or chance go I. . . and I may come there still. What will I need if and when I do?

by Christopher Kocsis



& Food & Nutrition



Food and Nutrition is a magazine of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In it you'll find articles on the family food assistance and child nutrition programs administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service in cooperation with State and local agencies.

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